

## MEMORANDUM FOR INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE COLLECTION

FROM: AFIOH/SDE  
2730 Louis Bauer Dr Bldg 930  
Brooks AFB, TX 78235

SUBJECT: Influenza Surveillance

Yearly vaccination is the most effective method for preventing influenza-related morbidity among U.S. military personnel. With new influenza strains emerging each year, identification of circulating strains is needed to direct influenza vaccine development for the coming year.

We ask that specimens be obtained from a portion of your patients who present with influenza-like illness (ILI), which is defined as fever ( $\geq 100.5^{\circ}\text{F}$  or  $37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ , oral or equivalent) and either cough or sore throat. Ideally we would like to receive nasal washes. Nasal swabs or throat swabs will also be accepted. We recommend between 6 to 10 specimens from your location per week, which translates to about one patient from your facility per day. Since ILI disease incidence varies, we realize that your clinic may not always have six cases per week that meet the definition, so fewer than 6 specimens is acceptable in slower weeks. Sampling in the first 24 - 72 hours of symptoms is desirable since the amount of virus in the throat decreases rapidly through the course of the illness.

Nasal washes should be sent in sealed specimen cups. Specimens may be stored at  $2-8^{\circ}\text{C}$  up to 24 hours. If longer delays are anticipated, specimens should be frozen at  $-70^{\circ}\text{C}$ . DO NOT freeze nasal wash specimens in a normal  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  laboratory freezer. Nasal swabs that will reach our laboratory within 4 days may be held at  $4^{\circ}\text{C}$  and shipped on gel packs or dry ice. If a longer time is expected, the swabs should be frozen at  $-70^{\circ}\text{C}$  and only shipped on dry ice.

Influenza isolation is our main objective, but we will report back to you any virus we detect. Those viruses generally recovered are influenza A and B, parainfluenza 1, 2, and 3, adenovirus, enterovirus, and herpesvirus. We try to make sure that you receive the results as soon as we have them. The results may be transmitted via the computer as a patient report or as a message directly to you. We will work with you on what serves you best. We want to assist you with timely public health information as well as determine the specifics of the influenza virus at your geographic location.

If you are not a current customer of this lab, we will also need to set up a FedEx account and arrange for you to receive test results. Please call our customer service representative, Ms Cynthia Osburn, to arrange this. Her phone number is (210) 536-8378 (DSN 240-8378). Her email address is [cynthia.osburn@brooks.af.mil](mailto:cynthia.osburn@brooks.af.mil). Once we receive your information, we will send you 3 shipping boxes, specimen bags, test requisition forms (please mark the respiratory test) and 100 viral collection kits. These kits may be stored at room temperature until the specimen is taken. When you need more, you may notify me, the virology NCOIC [[angela.yuhas@brooks.af.mil](mailto:angela.yuhas@brooks.af.mil); (210) 536-3758], or Ms Osburn, and we will send the supplies to you.

We look forward to working with you in this cooperative effort of disease surveillance and invite any questions or comments you may have.

//SIGNED//  
Linda C. Canas

Chief, Diagnostic Virology

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